

# **COLLECTION OVERVIEW**

## **MUSIC**

### **I. SCOPE**

There has been music in the collections of the Library of Congress from its earliest years, although the subject received scant attention until the enactment of the Copyright Law of 1870. This law centralized all U.S. copyright registration and deposit activities at the Library of Congress, and had an immediate and significant impact on the acquisition of music. In 1897, Congress officially established a Music Department to deal with the more than 400,000 music items that had accumulated. Music Division Chief Oscar Sonneck transformed what began as little more than a music copyright warehouse into a world-class research library during his tenure from 1902-1917. Sonneck ordered all music-related materials from the general collections transferred to the Music Division, making it a subject-focused as well as a special format division.

This overview focuses on Library of Congress holdings in the subject area of music that are in the custody of the Music Division. The collections include the classified music and book collections covered by Library of Congress classification schedules M (Music), ML (Literature on Music), and MT (Musical Instruction and Study), music and literary manuscripts, iconography, microforms, periodicals, musical instruments, published and unpublished copyright deposits, and close to 600 special collections.

Music holdings also may be found in several other locations, notably the special format divisions and the Archive of Folk Culture in the American Folklife Center. The collection policy statements covers the following materials: Dissertations and Theses, Folklife, Manuscripts, Moving Image, Photographs, Posters and graphic art, and Sound Recordings.

Several area studies collections also contain music-related material due to their special language considerations; see especially the collection overviews for the countries of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Similarly, the Rare Books and Special Collections Division holds music items such as broadsides, early American sheet music, libretti, and other rare volumes including the thirteen books on music theory and literature in the collection of Thomas Jefferson.

### **II. SIZE**

Cataloged and classified items, uncataloged copyright deposits, and special collections suggest an estimate of approximately 20,500,000 items.

Selected Statistics of Cataloged and Classified Holdings and Special Collections include: M (Music Scores) – 2,414,000; ML (Music Literature) – 123,000; MT (Music Theory:

Instruction and Study) – 83,000; and Special Collections – 575 (13,000,000 items).

### III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The strengths of the music collections include American concert and popular music--especially American musical theater, European concert music, opera scores and libretti, symphonic and chamber music, and music of the twentieth century. Holdings of early imprints of theoretical treatises and music literature are extensive, estimated at about two-thirds of all such books printed before 1800; also significant are holdings of music periodical literature from the eighteenth century to the present. The collections of holograph scores, many of which have never been published, are incomparable. Rare volumes of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century music tablature are also important.

Close to 600 special collections provide unequalled resources for musical research. They contain a wide variety of materials including: music manuscripts, printed music, correspondence and other literary manuscripts, concert programs, scrapbooks, and photographs. The vast majority of these items date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Particularly noteworthy are the great number of holograph scores, especially of twentieth-century concert and musical theater composers of the United States, and collections of papers and correspondence of twentieth-century composers, performers, and scholars.

### IV. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Subscription databases provide online access to important music reference tools such as the *Grove Dictionaries of Music and Musicians*, *Opera*, and *Jazz* (*Oxford Music Online*); *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Credo Reference); and *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (Biography Resource Center). *Notable American Women* and the *Dictionary of American Biography* are examples of other general reference tools that are now online and also of value for music research. One caveat, however, is that these titles are often bundled and can be hard to find.

Essential online indexes for music research include *Doctoral Dissertations in Musicology Online*, *International Index to Music Periodicals*, *Music Index*, *RILM Abstracts of Music Literature*, *RIPM: Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals*, and *RISM International Inventory of Musical Sources After 1600*. Full-text electronic journals covering music subjects are becoming more prevalent and are available through utilities such as JSTOR. Some full-text doctoral dissertations are available through *Digital Dissertations*. Additionally, full text of historical journals and newspapers are an extraordinary resource for locating reviews of performances and information about musicians. Noteworthy among these publications are the historical newspapers available through ProQuest and the *American Periodical Series Online*.

The Music Division has made selected collections available online from the beginning of the Library's effort to create a National Digital Library. One of the earliest Web sites,

*Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music*, draws on the division's exemplary holdings of nineteenth-century copyright deposits and offers more than 60,000 pieces of historical sheet music registered for copyright from 1820-1860 and 1870-1885. Additional Web presentations document the life and work of eminent composers such as Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, and John Philip Sousa through digitized letters, photos, music manuscripts, and published scores from special collections. Other Web sites are topical in nature and deal with subjects like patriotic songs, ragtime, and American choral music. The Performing Arts Encyclopedia is being developed as a portal to performing arts resources across the Library of Congress, bringing together Web presentations, collection descriptions, finding aids, online exhibits, and searchable databases.

Limited resources for Web development and a Library-wide emphasis on a K-12 online audience have resulted in a dearth of digital music material for the serious scholar. Few of the rare and priceless original autograph scores, letters, and early music imprints, all of which would be of great interest to scholars, have been made available online. The Library should be a leader in bringing such unique, one-of-a-kind material to the world in digital form as, for example, The Juilliard School has done with their manuscript collection.

## **V. AREAS OF DISTINCTION**

The Division's areas of distinction include the following:

*American popular song:* Historically, copyright registration and deposit has been a central component of music acquisitions, resulting in a music collection that is renowned for its comprehensive coverage of American music and superlative holdings of American popular song. Particularly well-represented are songs from stage and film. These holdings join special collections of such well-known songwriters as Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Victor Herbert, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, and Richard Rodgers to make the Library an unmatched resource for the study of American musical theater.

*Opera:* The music collections are recognized for their holdings of opera full scores, piano/vocal scores, and libretti. The Albert Schatz Collection contains more than 12,000 printed libretti, many that date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among the scores are copies transcribed in the early twentieth century from hundreds of opera scores held in foreign libraries, some of which were destroyed during WWII. In a few cases it is believed that the Library's reproduction is the sole surviving copy.

*Autograph music manuscripts:* Extensive holdings of original music manuscripts include works of numerous distinguished American composers, including Leonard Bernstein, Elliott Carter, Aaron Copland, Ruth Crawford Seeger, David Diamond, Edward MacDowell, William Schuman, and John Philip Sousa. The collections also include original manuscripts by the most important names in the history of Western music—Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Alban Berg, Johannes Brahms, Franz Joseph Haydn, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Arnold Schoenberg, Franz Schubert, and Robert Schumann.

*Commissioned musical works:* The Library of Congress is unique among national

libraries in supporting the creation of new musical works through commissions to composers. The Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation Collection and the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation Collection contain autograph music manuscripts and supporting documentation on the foundations' commissioning activities. These collections contain such musical masterpieces of the twentieth century as Copland's *Appalachian Spring* (a Coolidge commission) and Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* (a Koussevitzky commission).

*Brahms and Liszt holdings:* The Library holds one of the world's major collections of letters and music manuscripts of Johannes Brahms, including the autograph score of the Third Symphony, the Horn Trio, the Piano Quintet, and the Violin Concerto, a gift of violinist Fritz Kreisler. The Library is also known for its first-class collection of music manuscripts, first editions, and correspondence of Franz Liszt, assembled by former Music Division Chief and eminent Liszt scholar Edward N. Waters.

*M1490s:* The Library has a significant collection of music printed or copied in manuscript before 1700. These volumes are extremely rare and in many cases the Library holds the only copy outside of Europe—in some cases, the only extant copy.

## **VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS**

Under the provisions of current copyright law, much popular/vernacular music is registered and deposited in recorded format and has no corresponding print version in the collections. Standing orders were once treated as subscriptions and cancelled if there was no action during a given time period, with no notification given to the custodial division. This has resulted in some monographic series with missing volumes that are now impossible to obtain. In addition, non-Western music is collected selectively. Few microforms of major materials in other collections have been acquired nor are foreign dissertations and theses found in the collection, unless offered in formal publication. Music software and computer files (CD-ROMs) are collected selectively since at present there are no public computers in the reading room on which to make such material available.